

In the days of the Lord Jesus on earth the devil was a personal active agency that entered into and possessed the lives of men. I do not believe he is any less so today, and instead of calmly submitting to every ill of life, and every black crime as being the will of God a slumbering church ought to arise in the power of the Holy Spirit in prayer to God that He might stay the hand of our common foe.

THE CHURCH PAPER IN THE HOME

R. R. TEETER

Many of the chief blessings that are a part of present day living have come to us thru the efforts of genius in discovery and invention. One that both gives delight and furnishes opportunities for higher human culture is the modern methods of book making and magazine and newspaper publishing at such prices as make them accessible to people in moderate or limited circumstances as well as to the well-to-do and the rich. Thus literature has come to be an important factor in every well-regulated home, and the children are taught to regard and appreciate the works of worthy authors as never before.

And certainly this literary atmosphere cannot surround the home without producing results. We know it to be a power, and we see its present force moulding the thought of adult minds. One's mind can scarcely be so radical or so narrow that a contact with the thought of others for a continued period will fail to produce an appreciable broadening effect. Marked as this effect is on the adult mind, we see it even more so on the youthful in the moulding of character in the more distinctly formative period of life.

This present power of literature in the home is only a brief introduction to its power over the future in determining the acts and relations of men toward one another and toward society in general. There may be a few sentimental individuals whose acts are determined by momentary impulses, but thought and pre-determination rule the acts of the majority. Again, as new life is infused into the world of humanity in the form of younger generations, the power and effect of literature is seen in its effective determining the career of the youthful. Many a man at the close of a long career can look back to the influences that bore him on his course and see the forming power of the books and papers he read in his youthful days.

This makes it important to know the kind of literature that should be admitted into our homes. Ordinarily it is that which best meets the craving of the one who chooses. And if it is true that a man is known by the books he reads, an examination of the book shelves and paper racks of many homes would tell a mournful tale. While the quantity may be abundant and sometimes the quality good for its kind, yet, too often, the kind is not what one would wish, as books and periodicals of a distinctly elevating moral and religious tone are greatly in the minority. It

is true that in recent years much has taken place in the world that tends to attract the attention of multitudes away from the more spiritual things of man. With the wars and rumors of wars, and political and social unrest of the world, the mind has every opportunity to be occupied, and not only has religious literature had a fierce conflict with a popular antagonist, but the church as well has had to meet the same stalwart foe. The value of a distinctly religious literature has often been emphasized in our own church paper, and only recently our attention has again been brought to the subject by the timely contribution from the pen of Professor Furry. I believe all he said, and more. We have a church paper that is good, tho not perfect, and it should be in the home of every member of the Brethren church. It should be there for several distinct reasons. First, for religious instruction. As thru our magazines and great newspapers we keep ourselves informed concerning the important events and problems of the world, so thru the columns of a church paper we should receive information concerning the spiritual and religious condition of the human family. There are popular independent religious papers that will keep one well informed in a general way, but a paper that is published to attract the general public is not as interesting to me as one that has some set principles for which it contends in a consistent Christian spirit.

A paper as well as a man can bring about more satisfactory results when it has a definite end toward which it is bending every energy. For this reason our church paper should receive our hearty support that it may more successfully accomplish its mission. It is a fact that multitudes of church members of different denominations, where no catechism or set form of instruction is used in preparing converts for church membership, cannot give an intelligent statement of the doctrines and beliefs of the church to which they belong, much less give any Scriptural reasons for the same. I think it will be found to be almost universally true that such people have no acquaintance with the publications of their own church. Again, one's sense of loyalty should prompt him to be a reader of the literature of his own church. Those who are active in politics are always expected to be faithful supporters of the papers that champion the cause of the party to which they belong, and one does not expect a loyal Republican to allow his own Republican paper to be supplanted by a Democratic organ, nor *vice versa*. Neither does a party politician depend upon an independent paper for his political information and knowledge of affairs.

We should be just as true to our principles of church as politicians are to their parties, and if we are members of the Brethren church because we love her principles above all others, we should receive our spiritual food from our own literature and not depend upon that which we may secure from a paper

that knows little and practices less of the truths we love and that give us the right to a separate being.

Again our church paper in the home keeps us from becoming self-centered and contracted in our Christian efforts. Perhaps the most generally read department of our paper is that given to church news and reports. Thru these columns one is made to feel the activity of other churches and is sometimes stimulated to greater activity himself. It makes him feel not so much a separate individual as a distinct part of a whole body. I think our most active and fruitful churches are those in which are found the greatest proportionate number of subscribers to the BRETHREN EVANGELIST. Now, whether the activity of the church makes it a body of readers of the church paper, or whether the body of EVANGELIST readers makes the activity of the church or just what relation one bears to the other may be a problem difficult of solution, but my own opinion would be given in favor of the greater influence of the reading of the church paper. It would certainly be an interesting experiment for some pastor whose church is cold and indifferent to make a persistent effort to double the number of EVANGELIST subscribers and note the effect in his church.

Another thing that I think my observation has taught me is that not only are the most attentive readers of our church paper the most active members of the church, but they are the ones easiest to get along with and cause fewest disturbances in the churches or between pastor and people. Unless one is spiritual-minded to a certain extent he cannot read the church paper with any degree of satisfaction, while on the other hand one seemingly cannot read it continuously without developing a more or less spiritual mind. In either case it makes a harmonious Christian life more possible. It is true there are many who seem not to appreciate the many helpful things found in our paper, as one young man who had been induced to subscribe for it, afterward said to me, that he regarded that dollar and a half as one of the poorest investment he ever made. It is needless to add that tho he is a young man of considerable talent and some culture, he was a source of anxiety to the church and his own family. Or some may be as the lady who, some years ago when the EVANGELIST was changed from a folded eight page quarto to its present cut and stitched form, said to me: "I do not like the EVANGELIST as well as I used to, for it is not large enough any more to cover my cupboard shelves." That is the utilitarian theory worked out with a vengeance. But while such discouragements in the way of lack of appreciation sometimes appear they are only the deeper shadows that set off in brighter contrast the keen zest and great avidity of more appreciative readers.

Again there are some who have never realized the need and usefulness of their own